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Science

Science

Life Science

A Day in the Life of a Vet

by Kristin Cashore
illustrated by Aleksey Ivanov



Genre	Comprehension Skills and Strategy	Text Features
Narrative nonfiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sequence• Draw Conclusions• Graphic Organizers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Captions• Labels• Glossary

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What would a day in the life of an animal doctor look like? Maybe the doctor would start out in the morning by checking a cat's ears. Next she may look at the teeth of a **llama**. Then she might hike out to the forest to visit the wolves. At the end of the day, she may try to figure out why the **yak** has stopped eating.

Wait! That can't be right! What kind of animal doctor would take care of cats, llamas, wild wolves, *and* yaks?



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It's true that this would be a very strange day for any one **veterinarian**. Luckily, there are many different kinds of veterinarians!

A small animal veterinarian takes care of dogs, cats, rabbits, and other pets. It would not be strange for a small animal veterinarian to check a cat's ears.

A large animal veterinarian takes care of large animals on farms and ranches. It would not be unusual for a large animal veterinarian to check the teeth of a llama.



Small animal veterinarian

Large animal veterinarian



A wildlife veterinarian helps animals in the wild. A wildlife veterinarian might go to the forest to study wolves and their **growth**.

A zoo veterinarian cares for the animals in the zoo. A zoo veterinarian might try to figure out why a yak has a stomachache.

Let's meet some veterinarians and take a look at how they spend their days.



Wildlife veterinarians

Zoo veterinarian





Dr. Hopkins—A Small Animal Vet

Dr. Hopkins is a small animal veterinarian—or vet for short. She spends her day caring for animals like cats, dogs, birds, hamsters, fish, and rabbits. Some people have unusual pets, so Dr. Hopkins also cares for ferrets, lizards, mice, rats, frogs, and even small sharks!

Today Dr. Hopkins's first job is to check a cat's ears. Dr. Hopkins shines a light in the cat's ears, and then she does a few tests. Yes, this cat has ear mites. Dr. Hopkins gives the cat some medicine. The cat should be feeling better soon!



Cats make very good pets.



Dr. Hopkins's next patient is a dog who used to be a stray, until a nice man took him in. The first thing the man did was bring the dog to Dr. Hopkins for a checkup.

Dr. Hopkins looks into the dog's ears and eyes. She feels his belly and checks his fur for fleas. She gives him some shots to **protect** him from diseases. Then she takes some blood from the dog. Later she will check the blood to make sure the dog is healthy.

The dog looks good. Dr. Hopkins moves on to her next patient. A small animal vet has very busy days!





Dr. Martinez—A Large Animal Vet

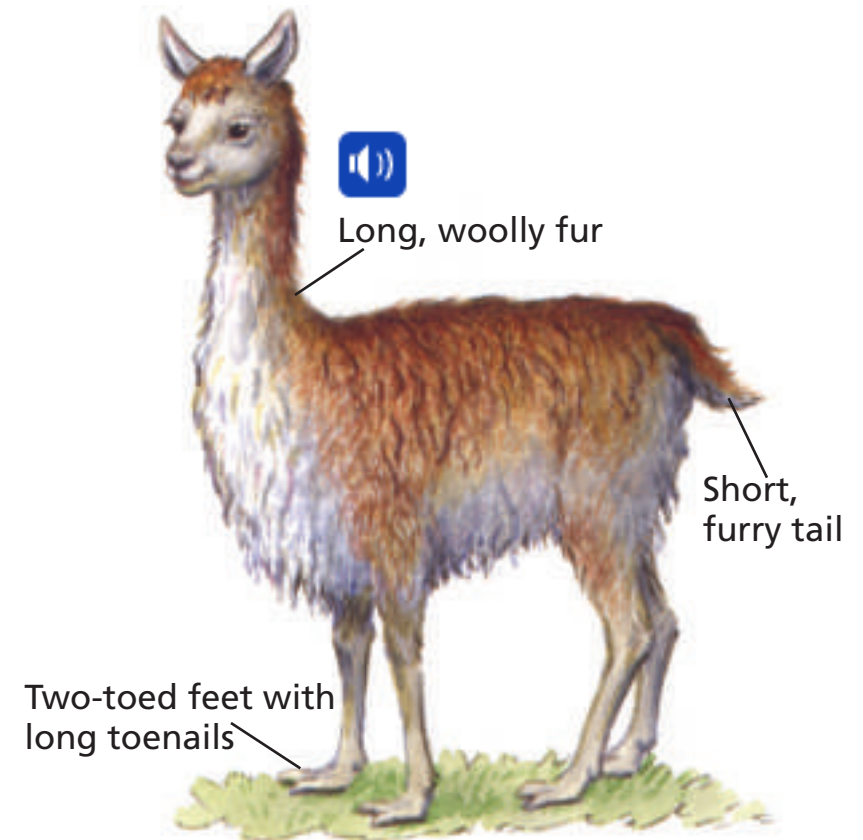
A large animal vet takes care of horses, sheep, goats, cows, llamas, pigs, and other farm animals.

Dr. Martinez is a large animal vet. His patients live on the farms near his home in the country. Dr. Martinez drives long distances every day to take care of farm animals. Today his first visit is with a llama.



Like other animals, llamas need checkups. Sometimes they need shots to keep them from getting diseases. They also need their toenails trimmed. Sometimes they have problems with their teeth. Dr. Martinez trims the llama's toenails and checks her teeth.

Next Dr. Martinez visits an old horse who is sick. He tells the farmer that the horse just needs some rest, and he gives the horse some medicine.



Llamas can be found on farms in South America.





Then Dr. Martinez drives to a dairy farm. A cow is having a baby, but it is not going well. The farmer is very worried, but Dr. Martinez knows how to help. The baby calf is born healthy and strong.

Where will Dr. Martinez drive next? Maybe he'll visit a sheep or a goat. A large animal vet is very busy. His day is full of driving and caring for farm animals.



Dr. Billings and Dr. Mor–Wildlife Vets

Wildlife vets work all over the world. A wildlife vet will often spend days, or even years, studying only one kind of animal. What wildlife vets do during the day all depends on where they live.

Dr. Billings is a wildlife vet in Wyoming. She studies wolves. When she finds an injured wolf, she cares for it until it is better. When the wolf is healthy she returns it to the wild. By doing this, she helps it **survive**.



Wolves live and hunt in groups called packs.





Dr. Mor is a wildlife veterinarian in Australia. Today he's trying to figure out why the koalas in the forest near his home are getting sick. He captures a few koalas in a safe way that doesn't harm them and then does some tests. Later he returns the koalas to the wild.

Dr. Mor looks for clues from the tests. When he figures out what is wrong, he will work to help the koalas. Maybe he will need to give them medicine. Whatever he finds, he hopes he can make sure no other koalas get sick.



Wildlife vets spend their days learning all about wild animals. They study where wild animals live, what they eat, and how they behave, as well as the effects that people have on the lives of wild animals.

Wildlife vets become experts at catching animals safely and returning them to their habitats. Sometimes they put tags on wild animals. This helps the vets recognize the animals the next time they see them.

Wildlife vets spend their days learning how wild animals and people can best share Earth.





Dr. Jung—A Zoo Vet

A zoo vet needs to know about all kinds of different animals. Dr. Jung is a zoo vet. It is his job to take care of hundreds of animals in the zoo.

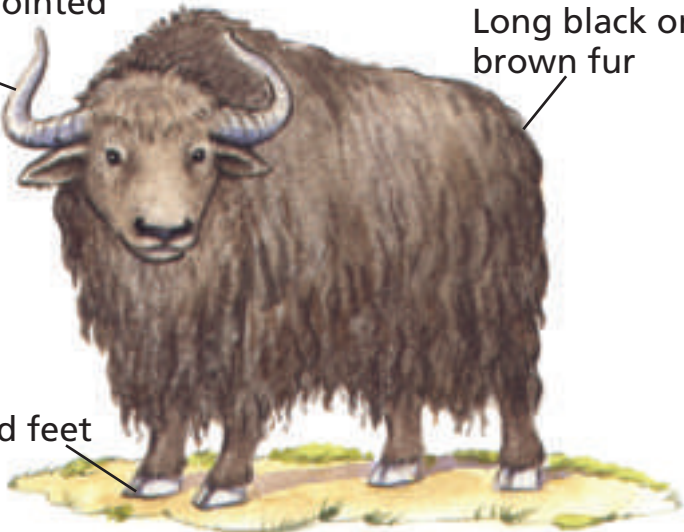
Remember the yak who isn't eating? Dr. Jung's first visit today is with the yak. He gives the animal a checkup. It's just what Dr. Jung thought. A visitor has fed the yak something it shouldn't have eaten! Visitors should never give their own food to the animals, since many animals cannot eat the same food as people. Our food can hurt them, or even kill them. Luckily, the yak should be feeling better soon. What a relief!



Long, pointed horns

Long black or brown fur

Hooved feet



Yaks are big, hairy, horned mammals that live in the mountains in Asia.



Now Dr. Jung must visit an elephant with a sore leg. Dr. Jung checks the elephant's leg. It is looking much better. Dr. Jung puts a new bandage on the elephant.

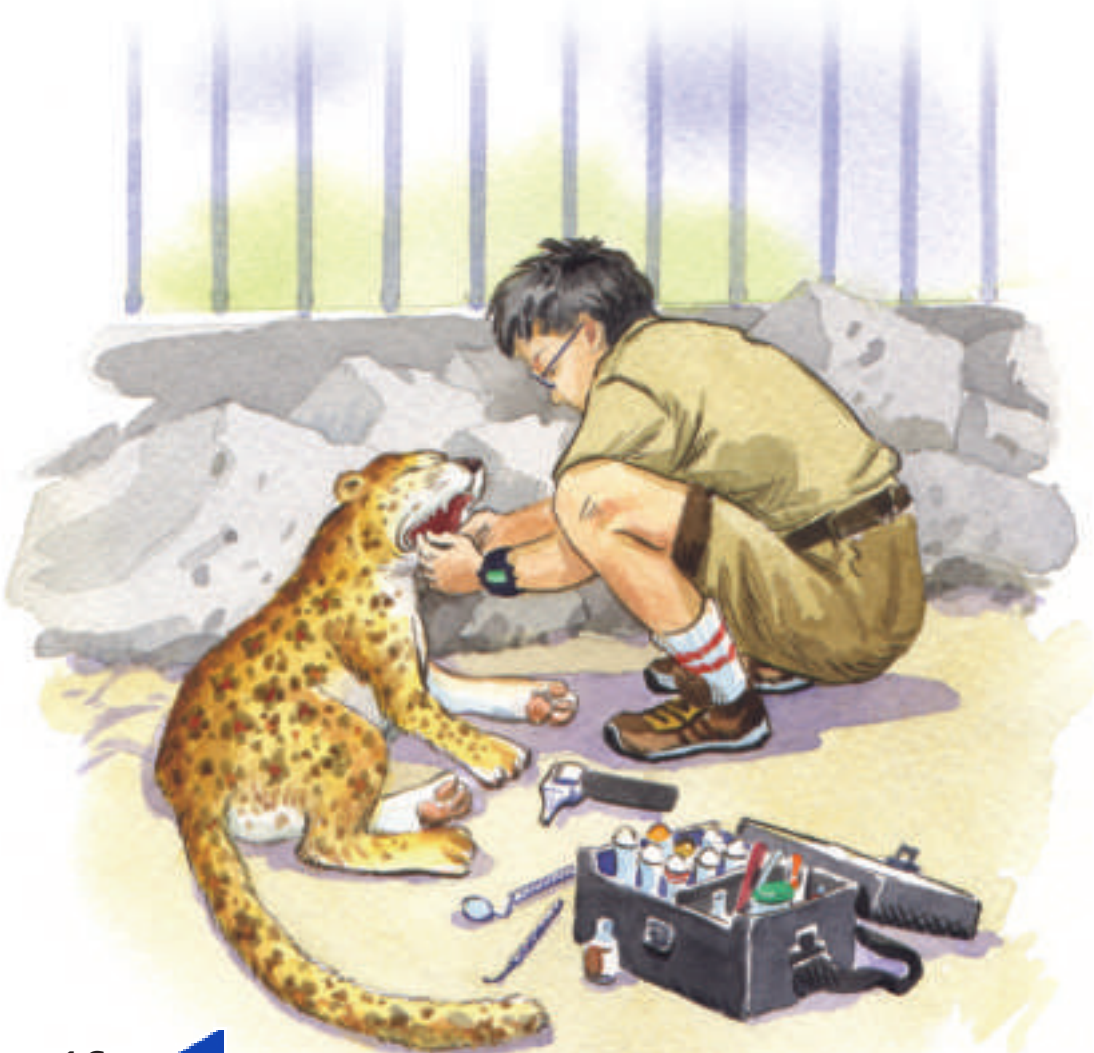
Next Dr. Jung visits a crocodile whose tail was broken. He takes a new X-ray of the crocodile's tail, checks this X-ray, and sees that the tail is healing well.





Like wildlife vets, zoo vets know how to give animals medicine to make them sleep. This makes it safe for Dr. Jung to help even the most dangerous animals. He is safely able to check the leopard's teeth in this way.

The health of every animal in a zoo is important. Dr. Jung does everything he can to keep the animals in the zoo healthy.



Vets might not take care of the same kinds of animals, but all vets are busy. Some help cats and dogs. Some care for cows and llamas. Some study wolves and koalas. Some are experts at every kind of animal in the zoo.

The next time you play with a friend's pet, drive past a field of cows, see a wild bird, or go to the zoo, remember the vets who keep Earth's animals healthy and safe.





Now Try This

Imagine you could work as one of the kinds of vets discussed in the story. Which kind would you choose? What would your day be like? Write a diary as if you were a vet.



Here's How to Do It!

1. Decide which kind of vet you would be.
2. Think about what kind of day you would have. Ask yourself questions:
What animals would you see?
Where would you go?
What would you do?
3. Write a diary entry to tell what your day was like.
4. Share your entry with the class.



Large animal vet



Small animal vet



Wildlife vet



Wildlife vet



Zoo vet





Glossary

growth *n.*
increase in size or
development.

llama *n.* a long-
haired South
American animal
related to the
camel.

protect *v.* to keep
safe.

survive *v.* to
continue to live.

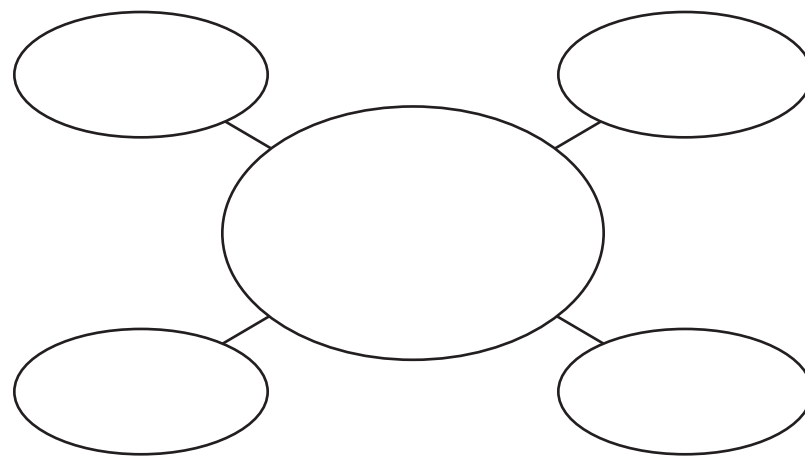
veterinarian *n.* a
person who cares
for animals; animal
doctor.

yak *n.* a large
central Asian
animal similar to
an ox.



Reader Response

1. On pages 14–15, Dr. Jung visited three animals. In what order did he visit them? Why might he have visited the animals in this order?
2. Use a graphic organizer like the one below to organize information about one or more of the veterinarians mentioned in this book. Write the veterinarian's name in the center and the animals he or she treats in the surrounding circles. Use examples from the book, and name other animals you think the vet might care for.



3. What does it mean to help an animal *survive*?
4. Turn to page 14. What can you learn about yaks from the illustration?

